Pgh. Post Gazette 4-11-77

House Slay Panel Picks State Man Acting Counsel

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Alvin B. Lewis Jr., a Pennsylvania lawyer, was appointed yesterday acting chief counsel and staff director on the House Committee on Assassinations, the committee chairman said.

Lewis

Lewis of Palmyra, Lebanon County, Pa., replaces Richard A. Sprague, who resigned March 30 after a long-standing feud with former committee chairman Henry Gonzalez, D-Tex.

Committee Chairman Louis Stokes, D-Ohio, said through a spokesman that Lewis will serve as counsel to the 12-member committee for about one month, or until a permanent counsel is named.

Announcement of the interim appointment was made here by Burt Chardak, committee public relations director.

Sprague, the controversial former Philadelphia district attorney, stepped down as counsel after reportedly being convinced that his departure would clear the way for the committee to continue its probes in the assassinations of President John F Kennedy and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

The day after his resignation, the full House voted to continue funding for the committee for at least one more year.

Stokes said the select committee has constituted itself into a committee of the whole to search for a permanent successor to Sprague.

Once the list is narrowed, the candidates will be interviewed by the committee. The person chosen must be approved by majority of the committee.

Stokes added that "there are outstanding persons on the staff, and they are not excluded from consideration." Lewis indicated to the committee, however, that he is not a candidate for the position, according to Chardack.

Lewis, 43, was special counsel for the committee since last Dec. 6. He resigned his post last Thursday while at the same time offering his services during the transition period.

Lewis was elected Lebanon County district attorney in 1961 and served for eight years. In that job he supervised a number of major cases in central Pennsylvania.